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BLACK IS BACK: The Incredible Story Behind the Relaunch of the First Parenting Magazine for Black Parents

NATIONAL - Successful Black Parenting magazine was originally founded in 1993 and launched in 1995, debuting with 35,000 issues. It was the first national print magazine for African American parents. The founders closed the magazine in 1997 and almost 21 years later, they are bringing it back on July 1, 2016 with a relaunch.

“We felt the time is right with the challenges in the Black community such as the Black Lives Matter movement, school challenges of Black children and the way racism has resurfaced in our society. At the same time, there is a vibrant spirit in our community that continues to work for a better world. This is the perfect time to relaunch,” said Janice Celeste, formerly Janice Robinson-Lopez, who is one of the founders and editor-in-chief of the magazine. “We started this process when my children were babies. Now my three daughters are adults and each one is successful in their own career and family lives. I’m even a grandmother now.” Success is key to everything Celeste does, right down to her own children. Her oldest daughter has her master’s degree in medical administration, the middle child a fashion designer and modeling agent in Manhattan, and her youngest daughter is super model, Sessilee Lopez who has been seen on Victoria’s Secret runways and on the cover of Vogue. “This magazine matters for many reasons. All families need support. African American families are no different. It is also very important for children to see positive images of themselves in the media to grow up being successful,” said Celeste, “You cannot be what you cannot see.”

Successful Black Parenting’s official website launch is July 1st, 2016. “For years now Janice and I always said, ‘If we had the resources that we have today, the magazine would still be on newsstands,’” said Marta Sánchez, co-founder and managing editor of the magazine. “This publication was our baby, we saw it walk, then run, but at that time we had just enough money to fail because printing was terribly expensive. We financed the entire venture with our own money and donations from family and friends, but what we really needed was a million-dollar budget. We were like two fleas holding on to a bucking bull! Today we have more connections and contacts.”

Celeste and Sánchez have a big plan. The digital launch comes first and they’re crowdfunding the initiative to provide research and development for the print issue, which will be launched in 2018. “Print is evolving,” said Celeste. “It’s definitely not dead. We have to cater to the needs of different readers, those who prefer digital and those who want to feel the quality of paper in their hands.” The magazine also hosts a livestream talk show called, *BackTalk* and recently interview Tracy Martin, Trayvon Martin’s father. “My background is in multimedia and journalism,” said Celeste, “We will bring topics to our parents any way that we can get them to listen.”

On the website, there is something for everyone. The columns are consistent with those that were published in the magazine more than 20 years ago and are still relevant today. Sections such as *Kuumba Arts & Crafts*, *Health Call*, *On My Own* about single parenting, *Jambalaya* which features culturally-sustaining books for children, *S.T.E.A.M.* which has science, technology, engineering, arts and math activities for young children, *Dedicated Dad* and then there is *GRAND Life* for grandparents. In addition to these regular columns, there are *Ages & Stages* articles along with monthly features that are highlighted. “We are the voice of Black parents,” said Celeste, “Our magazine advocates for parents and children. This magazine is just the start of much more to come.”

You can sign-up on Successful Black Parenting’s website at SuccessfulBlackParenting.com for updates. The crowdfunding campaign is set to raise \$20k for research and development and then a second phase to raise \$2m for the print publication. You can contribute to the crowdfunding site at Indiegogo.com or (<http://bit.ly/SBPIndiegogo>).